

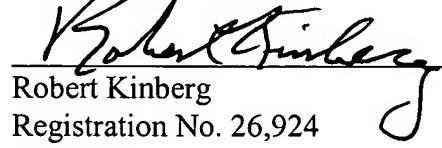
Joachim SCHICKE
31512-176923

REMARKS

This Preliminary Amendment is made to revise claim 1 to clarify the subject matter which applicant regards as his invention.

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Respectfully submitted,


Robert Kinberg
Registration No. 26,924
VENABLE
P.O. Box 34385
Washington, D.C. 20043-9998

Telephone: (202) 962-4800
Telefax: (202) 962-8300

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Joachim SCHICKE
31512-176923

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

1. A method of replacing a[n at least partially spent] first knife, which is locked in the knife holder of a severing unit that is operative to sever smokers' products, with a second knife, comprising the steps of:

automatically unlocking the first knife;
removing the first knife from the holder; and
introducing the second knife into the holder.

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